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SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator

Report of the Second Committee (Part II)

Rapporteur: Mr. Stoyan BAKALOV (Bulgaria)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on item 74 (see A/37/702, para. 2). Action to be taken on subitem (a) was considered at the 44th, 47th and 48th meetings, on 27 November and 8 and 13 December. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/37/SR.44, 47 and 48).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.2/37/L.82 and Rev.1

2. At the 44th meeting, on 29 November 1982, the representative of Kenya, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations which are members of the African Group, joined by Kuwait, introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/37/L.82) entitled "Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator". Subsequently, Lebanon and Turkey joined as sponsors of the draft resolution, which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 36/225 of 17 December 1981, by which it reaffirmed the mandate of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and called for the strengthening and improvement of the capacity and effectiveness of the Office,

"Recalling also its resolution 35/107 of 5 December 1980, by which it reaffirmed the necessity of ensuring a continued sound financial basis for the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and extended the term of the trust fund established pursuant to its resolution 3243 (XXIX) of 29 November 1974, and modified under its resolutions 3440 (XXX) of 9 December 1975 and 3532 (XXX) of 17 December 1975, until 31 December 1983,

"Recalling further its resolution 34/55 of 29 November 1979, by which it requested an increase in emergency disaster assistance, with a normal ceiling of \$30,000 per country in the case of any one disaster,

"Deeply concerned about the additional economic burden thereby placed upon the developing countries and by the increasing number of natural disasters and other disaster situations, as well as the disruption caused to their development process,

"Recognizing the contribution made by the United Nations system to the relief of suffering and provision of humanitarian relief in natural disasters and other disaster situations,

"Recognizing also that the primary responsibilities of administration, relief operations and disaster preparedness lie with the affected countries and that the major part of the material assistance and human effort in disaster relief comes from the Governments of those countries,

"Recognizing further the importance of the contribution of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and appropriate voluntary organizations,

"Recognizing that, in order to attain an effective co-ordination system of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance, it is essential to strengthen and improve the capacity and effectiveness of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and the United Nations system as a whole in order to enable the Office to respond to natural disasters and other disaster situations speedily, efficiently and effectively, thereby ensuring prompt delivery of concerned relief,

"Recognizing that a major constraint with respect to the ability of the United Nations system to respond effectively to natural disasters and other disaster situations has been the shortage of resources,

"1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator 1/ and of the statement made by the Co-ordinator before the Second Committee on 2 November 1982; 2/

1/ A/37/235.

2/ A/C.2/37/SR.27.

"2. Welcomes the action taken by the Secretary-General to improve the management operations of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and to establish modalities for the implementation of the procedures, outlined in General Assembly resolution 36/225, for dealing with requests for disaster relief from a disaster-stricken State and for dealing with complex disasters and emergencies of exceptional magnitude;

"3. Calls for a flexible interpretation of administrative regulations and procedures to facilitate a rapid temporary appointment of staff and procurement of supplies in order to permit a timely response to requests for emergency assistance;

"4. Requests the Secretary-General to raise the normal maximum of \$30,000 to \$50,000 to permit the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to respond to requests for emergency disaster assistance on at least 12 occasions in any one year with grants having a normal ceiling of \$50,000 per country in the case of any one disaster;

"5. Authorizes the Secretary-General to permit the Co-ordinator to make available additional resources to meet the needs presented by complex disasters and emergencies of exceptional magnitude;

"6. Decides to maintain for an undetermined period, as from 1 January 1984, the trust fund and its sub-accounts as they stand at present;

"7. Reiterates, in particular, the appeals made in its resolutions 35/107 and 36/225 for increased contributions to the trust fund of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, established pursuant to its resolution 3243 (XXIX), and modified under its resolution 3532 (XXX) and under paragraph 4 of the present resolution;

"8. Endorses the measures taken by the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to implement General Assembly resolution 36/225 and calls on the Secretary-General and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to develop concerted relief programmes in consultation with the agencies of the United Nations system concerned as a basis for united appeals for funds to be launched by the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator on behalf of the Secretary-General;

"9. Reiterates its desires to further strengthen and improve the capability of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to take full advantage of information provided by existing early-warning systems and to co-ordinate, to the extent feasible and useful, all relevant early-warning systems, taking into account new technological developments in this field, including communications;

"10. Calls upon the constituent organizations of the United Nations system and the specialized agencies, in order to eliminate wasteful duplication of resources, to co-ordinate, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 3 of Assembly resolution 36/225, their efforts at all stages of the response of the international community to natural disasters and other disaster situations;

"11. Reaffirms its belief that the strengthening and reinforcing of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator offers the most efficient and economic means of effectively co-ordinating the relief activities of the United Nations system as a whole in the interest of the survivors of disasters, and requests the Secretary-General to assign a higher priority to strengthening the financial and manpower resources of the Office;

"12. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1983."

3. A statement by the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution was circulated in document A/C.2/37/L.107.

4. At the 44th meeting, the representative of Turkey proposed an amendment to the draft resolution. The proposed amendment was to insert between operative paragraphs 2 and 3 a new paragraph which read as follows:

"Notes that the Governments of Chad and Lebanon have expressed their appreciation for the activities undertaken by the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator in Chad and Lebanon and requests the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to continue his emergency relief activities in these two countries."

5. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Bangladesh (on behalf of States Members of the United Nations which are members of the Group of 77), the Sudan and Kenya.

6. At the 47th meeting, on 8 December, the representative of Kenya, on behalf of Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, the United Republic of Cameroon, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Upper Volta, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe, introduced a revised draft resolution (A/C.2/37/L.82/Rev.1) entitled "Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator", which he further orally revised as follows:

(a) Reversing the order of paragraphs 5 and 6;

(b) In paragraph 13, adding the words ", preferably within the means at its disposal," after the word "strengthening preferably within the means at his disposal" and deleting the word "aid".

7. At the same meeting, the representative of the United States of America proposed an amendment to insert a new paragraph 15, reading as follows:

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"Authorizes the Secretary-General to implement the activities approved under this resolution only to the extent that they can be financed without exceeding the level of resources approved in the 1982-1983 programme budget (General Assembly resolution 36/240 A)."

8. Statements were made by the representative of Kenya (on behalf of the sponsors) and Bangladesh (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations which are members of the Group of 77).

9. At the same meeting, the Committee, by a recorded vote of 96 to 19, with 12 abstentions, rejected the amendment proposed by the United States. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Belgium, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mongolia, New Zealand, Poland, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Burma, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining: Australia, Austria, Barbados, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden.

10. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/37/L.82/Rev.1, as orally revised, by a recorded vote of 119 to 8, with 2 abstentions (see para. 13). The voting was as follows: 3/

3/ Subsequently, the delegations of Cyprus and Panama indicated that, had they been present, they would have voted in favour of the revised draft resolution.

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In favour: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burma, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Cameroon, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America.

Abstaining: Mongolia, Poland.

11. After the adoption of the resolution, statements were made by the representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America, Canada, Argentina, the German Democratic Republic and Panama.

12. At the 48th meeting, on 13 December, statements were also made by the representatives of Poland, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador and Cyprus.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

13. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 36/225 of 17 December 1981, by which it reaffirmed the mandate of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and called for the strengthening and improvement of the capacity and effectiveness of the Office,

/...

Recalling also its resolution 35/107 of 5 December 1980, by which it reaffirmed the necessity of ensuring a continued sound financial basis for the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and extended until 31 December 1983, the term of the trust fund established pursuant to its resolution 3243 (XXIX) of 29 November 1974, and modified under its resolutions 3440 (XXX) of 9 December 1975 and 3532 (XXX) of 17 December 1975,

Recalling further its resolution 34/55 of 29 November 1979, by which it requested an increase in emergency disaster assistance, with a normal ceiling of \$30,000 per country in the case of any one disaster,

Deeply concerned about the additional economic burden placed upon the developing countries by the increasing number of natural disasters and other disaster situations, as well as the disruption caused to their development process,

Recognizing the contribution made by the United Nations system to the relief of suffering and provision of humanitarian relief in natural disasters and other disaster situations,

Recognizing also that the primary responsibilities of administration, relief operations and disaster preparedness lie with the affected countries and that the major part of the material assistance and human effort in disaster relief comes from the Governments of those countries,

Recognizing further the importance of the contribution of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and appropriate voluntary organizations,

Recognizing that, in order to attain an effective co-ordination system of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance, it is essential to strengthen and improve the capacity and effectiveness of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and the United Nations system as a whole in order to enable the Office to respond to natural disasters and other disaster situations speedily, efficiently and effectively, thereby ensuring prompt delivery of concerned relief,

Recognizing that a major constraint on an effective response of the United Nations to natural disasters and other disaster situations has been the shortage of resources,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator 4/ and of the statement made by the Co-ordinator before the Second Committee on 2 November 1982; 5/

4/ A/37/235.

5/ See A/C.2/37/SR.27.

2. Takes note of the progress made by the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in initiating improvements in the management operations of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and in establishing modalities for the implementation of the procedures, outlined in General Assembly resolution 36/225 and decision 1982/1 of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, for dealing with requests for disaster relief from a disaster-stricken State and for dealing with complex disasters and emergencies of exceptional magnitude;
3. Takes note of the appreciation expressed by the Governments of Chad and Lebanon for the activities undertaken by the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator in those two countries, and requests him to continue his action in response to needs as they arise;
4. Requests the Secretary-General to facilitate, when necessary, rapid appointment of temporary staff and procurement of supplies by the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator in order to permit a timely response to requests for emergency assistance;
5. Requests the Secretary-General to raise the normal maximum of \$30,000 to \$50,000, the additional \$20,000 to come from voluntary sources, to permit the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to respond with grants to requests for emergency disaster assistance up to a total of \$600,000 in any one year, with a normal ceiling of \$50,000 per country in the case of any one disaster;
6. Authorizes the Secretary-General to permit the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to mobilize additional voluntary resources to meet the needs presented by complex disasters and emergencies of exceptional magnitude;
7. Decides to maintain as from 1 January 1984 the Trust Fund of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and its sub-accounts;
8. Reiterates, in particular, the appeals made in its resolutions 35/107 and 36/225 for increased contributions to the Trust Fund established pursuant to its resolution 3243 (XXIX), and modified under its resolution 3532 (XXX) and under paragraph 7 above;
9. Endorses the measures taken by the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination to implement General Assembly resolution 36/225 and calls upon the Secretary-General, who will normally be represented by the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, to consult with the concerned agencies of the United Nations system in order to develop concerted relief programmes as a basis for united appeals for funds to be launched by the Co-ordinator on behalf of the Secretary-General;

10. Reiterates its desire further to strengthen and improve the capability of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to take full advantage of information provided by existing early-warning systems and to co-ordinate, to the extent feasible and useful, all relevant early-warning systems, taking into account new technological developments in this field, including communications;

11. Urges all Governments and relevant organs and organizations to co-operate with the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and to improve in particular their flow of information on relief assistance, actions and plans;

12. Calls upon the constituent organizations of the United Nations system and the specialized agencies, in order to eliminate wasteful duplication of resources, to co-ordinate, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 36/225, their efforts at all stages of the response of the international community to natural disasters and other disaster situations;

13. Reaffirms its belief that the strengthening and reinforcing of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator offers the most efficient and economic means of effectively co-ordinating the relief activities of the United Nations system as a whole in the interest of the survivors of disasters, and requests the Secretary-General to assign a higher priority to strengthening, preferably within the means at his disposal, the financial and manpower resources of the Office;

14. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 36/225, including a report on the implementation of the present resolution, to the Assembly at its thirty-eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1983.
